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20 September 1955

9/22/55

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR:

There have been calls, beginning with one from Ernest Lindley last Friday and Saturday, on the Burgess-McLean case. I informed General Cabell of the Lindley call and I told Ernest how sorry we were but we had no comment; that the thing was something that no one here could get into except you and you would not be available before tomorrow. I told him also that I thought he should try the British Embassy for information.

Richard N. Brett-Smith of the LONDON TELEGRAPH AND POST called and asked two questions: (1) Would CIA comment on the Foreign Office statement that McLean and Burgess had been under surveillance as Communists? (2) Did the CIA know that McLean and Burgess were Communists and did we do anything regarding such information. We told him, "No comment."

John Scali of the AP called today and wanted to know whether we were aware of the activities of Burgess and McLean and he thought we should have been. I told him that we had no comment; that you were not here and I had not discussed the thing with anybody; and if there were any guidance it would have to result from instructions from you. I told John that I would try to let him know by tomorrow if there was anything to be said without attribution.

Don Gonzales also called and wanted to know for the UP if CIA knew of McLean's being suspected when he had a desk at the AEC. Don said that at that time there were many rumors regarding the man and he wondered if we had any information at that time. I told him that we would have no comment but that I had not discussed this matter with you and you were expected tonight and if there is any guidance, I will let him know tomorrow.

It would appear that CIA should not give any guidance nor get into the Burgess-McLean case in any public fashion because no matter what is said an allied nation will be involved; the FBI will be involved; and there is the strong possibility at this time of giving a political angle to any statement made in explanation regarding their activities while in the United States.

RECOMMENDATION: That I tell Scali and Gonzales tomorrow that I discussed their requests with you and you regretted that we could say nothing but "no comment."

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STANLEY J. GROGAN

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